

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00254 021342 Z

52

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 RSR-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 SIL-01 LAB-06 CU-04 EB-11 COME-00 /107 W

----- 083100

R 021310 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3400

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 254

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINS SF

SUBJ: PM WARNS AGAINST EXCESSIVE CRITICISM OF SCHLEBUSCH
COMMISSION

1. IN STATEMENT RELEASED MARCH 30, PRIME MINISTER VORSTER WARNED THAT CRIMINAL OR CIVIL ACTION MIGHT BE TAKEN AGAINST PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE " MALICIOUS AND INSULTING VIEWS AND STATEMENTS" ABOUT MEMBERS OF SCHLEBUSCH COMMISSION, WHICH INVESTIGATED NATIONAL UNION OF SA STUDENTS (NUSAS). VORSTER SAID GOVERNMENT HAD DUTY " TO PROTECT COMMISSIONS AND THEIR MEMBERS AGAINST UNWARRANTED DISPARAGEMENT." IF EXISTING LAWS INADEQUATE TO PROTECT MEMBERS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE COMMISSIONS, NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO DO SO WOULD BE ENACTED.

2. RESPONSE, EXCEPT FROM PRO- GOVERNMENT SOURCES, HAS BEEN STRONGLY OPPOSED TO VORSTER' S REMARKS. MOST TEMPERATE COMMENT CAME FROM LEADER OF OPPOSITION SIR DE VILLIERS GRAAF F, WHO SAID CRITICISM OF SCHLEBUSCH COMMISSION HAD " UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN ABNORMAL" BECAUSE COMMISSION' S FINDINGS LED TO BANNING OF EIGHT NUSAS LEADERS. HOWEVER, GRAAFF SAW NO NEED TO PROVIDE STATE- APPOINTED COMMISSIONS ANY FURTHER PROTECTION THAN THEY ALREADY WERE GRANTED BY LAW. MOST OPPOSITION TO VORSTER MUCH LESS RESTRAINED AND GENERALLY TOOK FORM OF EXCORIATING HIM
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00254 021342 Z

FOR ATTEMPTING TO BRIDLE LEGITIMATE CRITICISM.

3. SUBSEQUENT TO VORSTER STATEMENT, MR. ALLWYN SCHLEBUSCH, MP FOR KROONSTAD AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION, ANNOUNCED THAT SEVERAL CASES OF ALLEGED VIOLATION OF LAW GOVERNING COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ATTORNY GENERAL.

4. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF SCOPE OF EXISTING REGULATIONS PROTECTING COMMISSION MEMBERS FROM CRITICISM, IT HARD TO SEE WHY VORSTER FELT NEED TO THREATEN TO CHANGE LAW IF NECESSARY. BY LAW, " NO PERSON MAY INSULT, DISPARAGE OR BELITTLE A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION OR PREJUDICE, INFLUENCE OR ANTICIPATE THE PROCEEDINGS OR FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION." ANYONE CONVICTED OF DOING SO IS SUBJECT TO FINE OF UP TO R200 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR AS MUCH AS SIX MONTHS.
HURD

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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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JOHANNESBURG
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